

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS AMMAN 001425

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [SENV](#) [KWBG](#) [IS](#) [JO](#) [NO](#)

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST MULTILATERAL WORKING GROUP ON WATER

RESOURCES: SIGNING OF ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN-JORDANIAN

WATERNET PROJECT AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 46804

1. This is a joint message with Embassy Tel Aviv and ConGen Jerusalem.

2. In separate events on March 4 and 5 in Tel Aviv, Gaza, and Amman, representatives of Jordan, Israel, and the Palestinian Authority signed the multilateral working group "WaterNet" agreement that will create a shared electronic database on regional water issues. The Israeli and Jordanian signings took place "in the presence of" representatives of Norway and the United States (reftel), while the Palestinian signature was "confirmed" by Norwegian and American representatives (see below).

3. At the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem on March 4, Acting MFA Director General Yoav Biran signed the agreement on behalf of the Government of Israel. Also attending the signing for the GOI were Eviatar Maron, Deputy Head of MFA's Middle East Division, and Yaacov Keidar, Director of the Multilateral Coordination Department at the MFA. Embassy Economic Counselor Ted Mann and Norwegian Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Kari Bjornsgaard were present and signed the document on behalf of the United States and Norway respectively. At the ceremony, Biran stated that Israel's leadership was anxious to revive the multilateral process. The signing of the WaterNet Agreement, he said, was a good first step.

4. In the next step on the morning March 5, CESAR director and Norwegian Foreign Ministry official Jon Marten Trondalen carried the document to Gaza to be signed by Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) Chairman Nabil Sharif "for the PLO for the benefit of the Palestinian Authority." Trondalen then carried the document to Jerusalem, where CG Econ Chief Ranz and Jens Mjaugedal, the Deputy Representative of Norway to the PA, "confirmed" the signature of the agreement (since they were not physically present when Sharif signed in Gaza).

5. Finally, in the late afternoon of March 5, Jordanian Minister of Water and Irrigation Hazim al-Naser signed for Jordan in his office. Ambassador Gnehm and Norwegian Ambassador Sverre Stub were present and signed the documents on behalf of their governments. Also present were Jon Martin Trondalen, Nazih Bandak of the Amman WaterNet office, MWI Secretary General Said Bakri and Deputy SG Fayez Bataineh, as well as economic counselor Goldberger and regional environmental assistant Safadi. Minister Naser expressed his hope that the government of Norway would provide a long-term financing commitment for the project, but otherwise expressed appreciation for Norway's contributions to Jordan and the peace process. Trondalen said Lebanon and Syria had also expressed an interest in joining WaterNet. Ambassador Gnehm reiterated U.S. support for projects that address critical needs like water management through cooperation among the regional parties.

6. In all of the events, participants noted the critical role played by Jon Martin Trondalen over many years in bringing this agreement to fruition. Minister Naser also noted that while he wanted to avoid publicity for this signing, he hoped that a suitable public event would be the planned opening of the Amman WaterNet office this summer.

7. Post will pouch the signed U.S. copy of the agreement to NEA/RA - Lawson.
GNEHM